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ABSTRACT

This guide describes briefly the minimum program standards required in Colorado for adult basic skills and literacy programs. Program standards are defined for the following seven topics: educational gains, program planning, curriculum and instruction, staff development, support services, recruitment, and retention. Indicators for each of the topics also are described. Included in the guide is a glossary of 19 terms related to Colorado adult basic skills and literacy minimum program standards. (KC)

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COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Adult Basic Skills and Literacy

MINIMUM PROGRAM STANDARDS

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TOPIC: **EDUCATIONAL GAINS**

INDICATOR I: Learners demonstrate progress toward attainment of basic skills and life skill competencies that support their educational needs and personal goals.

MINIMUM PROGRAM STANDARDS:

1. Programs will administer or have on file a **skills assessment** for at least 70% of **students** during the **intake process.**

2. Programs will administer or have on file a **needs assessment** for at least 70% of students during the intake process.

3. Programs will measure student **progress** through a **formal system of evaluation** of at least 50% of students.

4. A **Student Education Plan** (herein and after referred to as the SEP) will be designed for at least 70% of the students. The SEP must include the student's short and long term **academic** and **personal goals** and be based on the assessment instruments.

5. A minimum of 70% of students will demonstrate progress within 40 instructional **contact hours.**

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TOPIC: **EDUCATIONAL GAINS**

INDICATOR II: Learners advance in the instructional program or complete program educational requirements that allow them to continue their education or training.

MINIMUM PROGRAM STANDARDS:

1. Programs will maintain and update administrative and academic records, including **progress portfolios**, for at least 70% of students.

2. 70% of students will advance toward or complete their academic and/or personal goals as identified in the individualized SEP.

3. At least 50% of students will be given a skills assessment upon exit or will have a progress portfolio.

TOPIC: **PROGRAM PLANNING**

INDICATOR III: Program has a planning process that is ongoing and participatory, guided by evaluation, and based on a written plan that considers community demographics, needs, resources, and economic and technological trends, and is implemented to the fullest extent.

MINIMUM PROGRAM STANDARDS:

1. Programs will have an annual written plan which will include a mission statement and long and short term goals.

2. On an annual basis, the written plan and its implementation will be evaluated, and revised as necessary, by a committee consisting of staff, volunteers, clients and community members.

3. Programs will establish at least one new **reciprocal partnership** per year.

4. On an annual basis, a new funding source will be identified and a proposal submitted for additional resources.

TOPIC: **CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

INDICATOR IV: Program has curriculum and instruction geared to individual student learning styles and levels of student needs.

MINIMUM PROGRAM STANDARDS:

1. Programs will develop (or use existing) core curriculum guides for all **instructional mastery.** Based on student needs, guides will be evaluated annually and revised.

2. For annual evaluation of instructional staff, criteria will include, but not be limited to, the use of diverse teaching methods, individual learning styles and cultural diversity.

TOPIC: **STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

INDICATOR V: Program has ongoing staff development process that considers the specific needs of its staff, offers training in the skills necessary to provide quality instruction, and includes opportunities for practice and systematic follow-up and evaluation.

MINIMUM PROGRAM STANDARDS:

1. Program will administer an annual needs assessment to **staff** to determine individual training needs.

2. Program will offer an opportunity of a minimum of 8 hours of **inservice training** to staff during the program year based on staff needs assessment.

3. Program will offer new volunteers at least 12 hours of **basic training** in the first year of service and a minimum of 8 hours of inservice annually for all volunteers in subsequent years.

4. Paid program staff will be evaluated for job performance annually.

5. Programs will compile a list of identified sources of professional resource material and disseminate to paid and volunteer staff on an annual basis.

TOPIC: **SUPPORT SERVICES**

INDICATOR VI: Program identifies student's needs for support services and makes services available to students directly or through referral to other educational and service agencies with which the program coordinates.

MINIMUM PROGRAM STANDARDS:

1. Programs will compile or update agency/services resource directory annually based on student needs.

2. Programs will make available to at least 70% of students information regarding subsequent education and training opportunities.

TOPIC: **RECRUITMENT**

INDICATOR VII: Program successfully recruits the population in the community identified in the Adult Education Act as needing literacy.

MINIMUM PROGRAM STANDARDS:

1. Programs will have a written process in place to identify and recruit the target population needing literacy services. Process will be reviewed and updated annually.

TOPIC: **RETENTION**

INDICATOR VIII: Students remain in the program long enough to meet their educational needs and personal goals.

MINIMUM PROGRAM STANDARDS:

1. Programs will measure and **track** student retention in terms of progress towards educational needs and personal goals for at least 70% of students.

2. On an annual basis, programs will identify and address at least two factors which contribute to retention.

3. Programs will record **attendance** for at least 70% of students.

4. Programs will retain students so that 50% reach two educational and/or personal goals.

COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Adult Basic Skills and Literacy

MINIMUM PROGRAM STANDARDS
Glossary of Terms

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The following words and/or phrases have been used in the Colorado Minimum Program Standards. In the standard statements, these words appear in bold print. In this glossary, we have listed them in alphabetical order.

Any word or phrase in the definition with an asterisk in front of it will be further defined in this glossary.

Academic goals are those identified by student and staff. The skills assessment process will be used to identify the student's strengths and weaknesses and guide in the development of each individual's instructional program.

Attendance is a written record of the numbers of hours a student is present in the program, compiled on a daily, weekly or monthly basis.

Basic training shall be defined by the needs of the program and based on the job duties and responsibilities of the volunteer/s.

Contact hour is defined as a minimum of 45 minutes of instruction per 60 minutes.

A **formal system of evaluation** is methods by which instructional staff measure and evaluate student progress; i.e., instructor made tests, observation, verbal communication, as well as *standardized test/s. Evaluation should be done weekly, monthly, quarterly.

Inservice training is an opportunity offered to staff which enables them to enhance job skills and capabilities.

Instructional mastery may be interrupted as measured incremental gains with a level (i.e., 2.0 to 2.1 or 6.5 to 7.0); the mastery of specific levels (i.e., 0-3.9, 4.0-6.9 etc.); and/or the attainment of any identified personal goal.

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Intake process is a systematic method as defined by each program for registration and assessment that leads to student placement.

Needs assessment is a written survey and/or documented interview of the long and short term goals as defined by the student.

Personal goals are those identified by the student. In many instances these may have been identified in the needs assessment.

Progress is documented, incremental measures of personal and academic student achievement levels.

Progress portfolio is a student file which may include daily assignments and documented academic and personal mastery.
NOTE: The progress portfolio is **not** the portfolio required to be submitted to the Adult Education office for documenting completion of a level in the Colorado Certificate of Accomplishment process.

Reciprocal partnership is a documented agreement between an Adult Education program and one or more agencies for an exchange of services. Services may include cash, collaboration or in-kind contribution.

Skills assessment is a testing process to evaluate a student's academic skills and/or life skills. The testing process must include a State approved "standardized test; however, other tests may also be used. The testing process is administered during the initial intake and periodically throughout the student's program year.

Staff will be defined by each program and may or may not include support staff and volunteers.

Standardized tests were identified by practitioners through research and evaluation commonly used assessments. Three tests have been recommended to the SEA for initial placement and reporting purposes. They are:
BEST - Basic English Skills Test (ESL; competency-based)
CASAS - Competency Assessment System for Adult Students (0-12.9; competency-based)
TABE - Test of Adult Basic Education (0-12.9; content based)

Student is defined in the Adult Education Act as "an adult who has attained 16 years of age or who is beyond the age of compulsory school attendance under State law."

Student Educational Plan (SEP) is a written document for each student which outlines academic and personal goals. The SEP will include a time frame defined by student and staff; and will be periodically reviewed and updated.

Track is a documented record of student progress.